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S P E E C H
OF
HON. WILLIAM T. AVERY,
OF TENNESSEE,
ON
OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 24, 1859.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—
Mr. AVERY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The country has great cause of congratulation, sir, that the fretful elements of domestic discord do not now disturb us. Issues which aforetime thrilled and animated the public mind, seem, at least for a season, now to slumber. Kansas, for once, is quiet. I am gratified that the interesting and complicated questions of a foreign character, can now justly claim the consideration of the American Congress. - Never it seems to me did the matters which pertain to our foreign policy more peculiarly press themselves upon the attention of the representatives of the American people, than now. Great interests are at stake. In my judgment those interests are jeopardized. It behooves us, as sentinels upon the watch-tower, to look to it well that they be not sacrificed. Much has been said upon these questions, and but little done; the time for action has come. No stand-still policy suits our people. It is not adapted to their destiny. They are a progressive people, and demand a progressive policy.

Look, sir, a moment to our present surroundings. Upon our North, the border dominions of Britain frown upon us forever, peacefully, quietly, to be sure, and quite as neighborly, too, as some of our own northern sister States. Cast your eye to the South; how stands the case there? Does the American patriot see no cause of apprehension lest foreign intervention may build about us in those regions walls which will shadow our destiny? Mexico, that land so blessed by all the bounteous gifts of a prodigal nature, is rent and torn by annual revolutions, now in the midst of one threatening the

downfall of her nationality, rival military chiefs contending for military mastery, with no positive government of any kind, the opposing factions holding forcible possession of different States of the Republic. The President tells us in his recent message that—

“No American citizen can now visit Mexico on lawful business, without imminent danger to his person and property. There is no adequate protection to either; and in this respect our treaty with that Republic is almost a dead letter.”

Our political relations between that Government and this are suspended, whilst England, France, and Spain are all openly intervening with her domestic interests; with no ability to pay her debts, and no government against which to enforce them, insomuch that the President recommends, as a final resort, a protectorate over a portion of her territory, as a means to enforce our rights and redress our wrongs. My friend from Ohio (Mr. Cox) has thrown a flood of light upon the condition of that country. I listened with profound interest to his very interesting speech the other day.

But, sir, far above and beyond our interests with demoralized and dismembered Mexico, great as I acknowledge them to be, stand the questions of our relations with Cuba and the Central American States. They form, now, in my judgment, the foremost questions for the consideration of American statesmen. I cannot hope, sir, in what little I propose to say upon these topics, to be able to awaken any new interest, or to shed upon them any new light; and my apology for doing so is that I feel, concerning them, such deep solicitude.

And first, as to Cuba. There she sits, enthroned in the sea, a most lovely island, justly called the “Queen of the Antilles,” almost in sight of our own shores; in length, some six hundred and fifty miles; in breadth, averaging some sixty or seventy; with an area of some thirty-five thousand square miles—more than three-fourths as large as the sovereign State of Tennessee. Look, for a moment, to her commerce. For the year 1851, her exports amounted to over thirty-one million dollars; her imports, over thirty-two millions. The value of imports into Cuba, from the United States, in 1851, was over six millions, nearly all of which was in American bottoms. The exports to all the Spanish dominions was over thirteen millions. The exports to the United States was over seventeen millions; a greater amount than was received from any other country, save England and France. The trade between the United States and Cuba, in 1852, amounted to over six and a half millions imports, and nearly eighteen millions exports; and, in 1853, about the same. In 1850, the number of slaves in Cuba, according to the census returns, was over

four hundred and thirty-six thousand. The value of her agricultural productions amounted to nearly sixty millions. These facts faintly give some idea of the varied resources of the country, her growing commercial importance, the mutual trade between us, the great commercial relationship we sustain towards each other. It is unnecessary, however, to elaborate these items of resource, of a commercial character, as they have been so elaborately and eloquently interwoven into this debate by my distinguished friend from South Carolina, (Mr. KEITT.)

Sir, the acquisition of Cuba is no new question. Long ago it engaged the consideration of the first statesmen of the age; at a time, too, when its necessity was not half as pressing as now. Mr. Jefferson, in 1823, in writing to Mr. Monroe, then President, in the following strong language favored it:

"I candidly confess I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with the Florida point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as those waters which flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being."

Mr. Adams, in the same year, as Secretary of State, said:

"Cuba's commanding position, with reference to the Gulf of Mexico, and the West Indies, &c., gives it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared."

Mr. Everett, in 1852, while Secretary of State, in his reply to the French Minister, in opposition to the proposed convention between England and France and the United States, to commit us against its acquisition, clearly looked forward to its accomplishment.

President Buchanan, some years since, when he graced the floor of the American Senate, warmly advocated it, and, I am proud to say, as shown by his recent message to Congress, has not relaxed in his ardent desire to consummate this great and vital measure. In this connection he says:

"The Island of Cuba, from its geographical position, commands the mouth of the Mississippi, and the immense and annually increasing trade, foreign and coastwise, from the valley of that noble river, now embracing half the sovereign States of the Union. With that island under the dominion of a distant foreign Power, this trade, of vital importance to these States, is exposed to the danger of being destroyed in time of war, and it has hitherto been subjected to perpetual injury and annoyance in time of peace." * * * *

"The publicity which has been given to our former negotiations upon this subject, and the large appropriation which may be required to effect the purpose, render it expedient, before making another attempt to renew the negotiation, that I should lay the whole subject before Congress. This is especially necessary, as it may become indispensable to success, that I should be intrusted with the means of making an advance to the Spanish Government immediately after the signing of the treaty, without awaiting the ratification of it by the Senate. I am encouraged to make this suggestion by the example of Mr. Jefferson previous to the purchase of Louisiana from France, and by that of Mr. Polk in view of the acquisition of territory from Mexico. I refer the whole subject to Congress, and commend it to their careful consideration."

Sir, I heartily concur with the President upon these points. I think that Congress should, at this session, respond heartily and cordially to these recommendations. I, for one, am prepared to stand by him, and sustain him in every honorable way to accomplish this measure. I am desirous that no impediment shall be thrown in the pathway of a speedy negotiation. That every facility shall be afforded to further its accomplishment. And, sir, when all just and reasonable propositions shall have failed, when every just overture shall have been spurned upon the part of Spain, I am prepared to go as far as the furthest in any honorable policy looking to its accomplishment in some other manner.

Paramount to every other reason which may be urged in favor of the acquisition of Cuba, stands the great question of its necessity as a means of national defense. That necessity, sir, which is recognized by the wisest expounders of international law, as justifying nations as well as individuals.

Did Cuba bring with her no commerce; had she no resources, no soil, no climate, no productions; were she a wild, barren waste upon the waters, her geographical position would still decree that she should be part and parcel of this Government. She commands the ingress and egress to the Gulf of Mexico. She is the key to our whole southern commerce, vast as it is. This subject has grown in magnitude and importance with the spread and growth of the great South and West. The rapid settlement of the great valley of the Mississippi, with her many and mighty tributaries, press upon our consideration its paramount importance. What a boundless commerce is borne upon the bosom of the great father of floods, every box, every bale, every pound of which is wafted by the white-winged messengers of commerce under the very port-holes of foreign fortifications, within the range of foreign, and may be hostile, guns! Is it not, then, a matter of national necessity that she should be ours? In the hands of an avowed enemy, what havoc could she not make of our commerce—the rich productions of every State bordering on the Gulf and the Mississippi, and her tributaries comprising half this Confederacy, and to which States alone belong the production of the great staple of the world, placed at the mercy of a hostile Power?

Sir, put any one of the enlightened principalities of Europe—Great Britain, France, Russia, or any of them—in the same relative position towards Cuba which this Government sustains, and Cuba would have long since ceased to be a province of Spain. She would long ago have been subjugated to the commercial and political interests of that country to which she was thus contiguous.

Nations as well as individuals are allowed, by the wisest

writers on international law, to adopt measures of self-preservation, to provide for their own safety against danger, remote as well as immediate. You will find this doctrine clearly laid down by that most conservative and able jurist, Chancellor Kent, in volume one, page 23, of his Commentaries.

The doctrine, too, is plainly recognized in the celebrated paper known as the Ostend manifesto, promulgated by Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Soule, in 1854.

This is the language of that paper:

“But if Spain, deaf to the voice of her own interest, and actuated by a stubborn pride and a false sense of honor, should refuse to sell Cuba to the United States, then the great question will arise, what ought to be the course of the American Government under such circumstances? Self-preservation is the first law of nature, with States as well as with individuals. All nations have, at different periods, acted upon this principle. Our past history forbids that we should acquire the Island of Cuba without the consent of Spain, unless justified by the great law of self-preservation. We must, in any event, preserve our own conscious rectitude and our own self-respect. Whilst pursuing this course, we can afford to disregard the censures of the world, to which we have been so often and so unjustly exposed. After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba, far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will be time to consider the question, ‘does Cuba, in the possession of Spain, seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union?’”

This, sir, is the doctrine enunciated by the present enlightened Chief Magistrate of our Republic, every word of which I indorsed and defended upon every occasion where I had the honor to address my fellow-citizens. The great idea is here boldly advanced, that nations as well as individuals have the right to use such means as they may deem necessary for their own self-preservation, and that it may not only be a present but a prospective danger. This doctrine, too, was triumphantly vindicated by the American people in the election of James Buchanan to the presidency of the United States.

Why, sir, this notion of taking Cuba upon the ground of self-preservation was by no means then a new one. Enlightened statesmen thought seriously on the subject more than forty years ago. So long ago as 1816. General Jesup, then a colonel in the American Army, in a very able letter written from New Orleans to Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of State, (and who seemed to favor the idea,) amongst other things uses the following strong and significant language:

“From the situation in which our country is now placed in relation to the great European Powers, policy, commercial and political, as well as military, points out the necessity of taking immediate possession of Cuba; and, from the numerous aggressions, and the uniform hostility of Spain, such an act would not be inconsistent with the soundest political morality. It is an act which may be justified by every principle which governs the most upright nation. The Spaniards are already the aggressors, and have been throughout the whole period of our history since the peace of 1783. The country in question is necessary to our defence, and in the possession of Great Britain, or any other maritime Power, would be dangerous to our repose.

“The people of this country are anxious for the event.”

Sir, with what ten-fold force will not every argument employed in this letter, more than forty years ago, now apply?

What, let me ask, are our relations with the Spanish Government? What have these relations ever been? Have we not been the subject of continual wrongs and outrages ever since we have been a Government? Is Spain not perpetually perpetrating upon our people, our commerce, and our flag, indignities which long since merited, and should have met, a just and righteous chastisement? What now, sir, at this present time, are we told by the President, are our relations with that most insolent and tyrannical power?

The President says in his message that—

“Spanish officials, under the direct control of the Captain General of Cuba, have insulted our national flag; and in repeated instances, have from time to time inflicted injuries on the persons and property of our citizens.”

* * * * *

“Even what had been denominated ‘the Cuban claims,’ in which more than a hundred of our citizens are directly interested, have furnished no exception. These claims were for the refunding of duties unjustly exacted from American vessels at different custom-houses in Cuba, so long ago as the year 1844. The principles upon which they rest are so manifestly equitable and just, that after a period of nearly ten years, in 1854, they were recognized by the Spanish Government. Proceedings were afterwards instituted to ascertain their amount, and this was finally fixed according to their own statement (with which we were satisfied) at the sum of \$128,635 54. Just at the moment, after a lapse of fourteen years, when we had reason to expect that this sum would be repaid, with interest, we have received a proposal offering to refund one-third of that amount, (42,878 41,) but without interest, if we would accept this in full satisfaction. The offer is, also, accompanied by a declaration that this indemnification is not founded on any reason of strict justice; but is made as a special favor.”

This, sir, is the official information coming to us from the President, of the insult that is added to injury, by the Spanish Government. Are outrages like these to be tamely borne? Sir, have these insults and injuries been redressed? Has our national honor in these instances of indignity, insult, and outrage, been vindicated? In no single instance, but in the case of the Black Warrior, has any reparation been made. How are we treated when appeal is made to the Captain General in Cuba?

Why, sir, whilst he is a despot in his own dominions, whilst he has the power to inflict unheard of injury upon our people, our commerce, and our flag, he has no power to redress. The President informs us that—

“Instead of making our complaints directly to him at Havana, we are obliged to present them through the Minister at Madrid. These are then referred back to the Captain General for information; and much time is thus consumed in preliminary investigations and correspondence between Madrid and Cuba, before the Spanish Government will consent to proceed to negotiation. Many of the difficulties between the two Governments would be obviated, and a long train of negotiation avoided, if the Captain General were invested with authority to settle the questions of easy solution on the spot, where all the facts are fresh, and could be promptly and satisfactorily ascertained. We have hitherto in vain urged upon the Spanish Government to confer this power upon the Captain General, and our Minister to Spain will again be instructed to urge this

subject on their notice. In this respect, we occupy a different position from the Powers of Europe. Cuba is almost within sight of our shores; our commerce with it is far greater than that of any other nation, including Spain itself; and our citizens are in habits of daily and extended personal intercourse with every part of the island. It is, therefore, a great grievance that, when any difficulty occurs, no matter how unimportant, which might be readily settled at the moment, we should be obliged to resort to Madrid, especially when the very first step to be taken there is to refer it back to Cuba.

"The truth is that Cuba, in its existing colonial condition, is a constant source of injury and annoyance to the American people."

This policy, in my judgment, sir, is pursued by Spain with cool and deliberate purpose. She clothes her Captain General of Cuba with all tyrannical power to harass and annoy, to injure and insult, and yet withholds from him corresponding authority to redress these wrongs. If this Cuban colony be made an engine of oppression and wrong, it should be clothed with the ability to right these wrongs. We are told by the President that repeated efforts have been made on the part of our Government to remedy this monstrous evil, but of no avail.

Sir, we are doubtless the most forbearing nation upon earth. I am not so sure that we have not had quite cause enough to warrant us in enforcing by the strong arm of power what we have failed to accomplish by milder means. I am not altogether certain but that the sentiment indicated by my distinguished friend from Mississippi, (Mr. DAVIS,) in the resolution he offered to the House the other day, is right; that it is time we should take these matters into our own hands, and if these manifold wrongs cannot be righted in any other way, right them ourselves.

Well, sir, how do the people of Cuba stand affected towards this question? What is their feeling? Take away the Government officers, the pampered beneficiaries of ignoble place, the minions of power, the tools and slaves of tyranny; take these away, and the great mass of the people of Cuba look forward with delight to its accomplishment. Recent dispatches tell us that while the Spaniards proper are aroused to some degree of excitement at the message of the President, a counter feeling of satisfaction pervades the Cuban masses. This feeling of opposition, too, wherever it exists, does not so much proceed from a fixed hostility to the contemplated annexation of Cuba to the United States, as from a national pride peculiar to Castilian blood, that brooks not the idea of being bought and sold. Sir, why should the people of Cuba not desire to change their allegiance? Do they not live under the most tyrannical Government upon earth? Are they not ruled with the iron rod of a military despot? Are they not kept in servile subjection by the most powerful standing army in the world, according to population? Does not their overburdened taxation go alone to swell and keep alive the pam-

pered, bloated, and tottering aristocracy of corrupt Spain? Do not all these facts argue trumpet-tongued to the people of Cuba themselves in favor of its annexation, and that this their beautiful gem of the ocean should soon add another star to our constellation of States?

Sir, what other bold and true American sentiment do we find enunciated in the Ostend manifesto? We find there this language:

"That should the Cubans themselves organize an insurrection against the Spanish Government, and should other independent nations come to the aid of Spain in the contest, no human power could, in our opinion, prevent the people and Government of the United States from taking part in such a civil war, in support of their neighbors and friends."

This, sir, I take to be the settled sentiment of the country; for upon these declarations Mr. Buchanan went before the country, and was triumphantly elected President.

A great truth is here enunciated. I know, sir, and you know, and every honorable gentleman upon this floor knows, that in such a contest in Cuba as this, (and it is now seriously threatened,) the great heart of the American people would irresistibly beat responsive to their struggle. We well know that strong American arms would be uplifted all over the land to strike the tyrants down, and liberate the oppressed.

But, sir, are there no legal barriers in the way? Is not there a wall of fire, through which these bold spirits would have to pass to accomplish their noble purpose? How, I ask, could this great, this spontaneous heart-throb of the American people, in a cause like this, have practical effect? Stand there not upon the statute-books stern laws imposing heavy penalties upon those who are swayed by these natural outbursts of American feeling? Are not now armed fleets, both British and American, crowding our waters and searching our vessels to seize upon every suspected violator of these laws? Sir, I have bestowed upon this subject much thought. And with an eye steadily fixed upon the rights, the interests, the prosperity, the proud advancement of my country, I must say if this construction be given to the neutrality laws, and it be the proper and correct construction; if it confer power upon British as well as American armed vessels to intercept and seize American emigrants, either with or without arms, upon the high seas, then, sir, I shall begin to think the illustrious and lamented Quitman was right in urging their repeal. Who dare tell me that the immortal Crockett was a lawless marauder, when, a martyr to Texan liberty, at the Alamo he fell?

Sir, have not, in the fresh recollection of gentlemen upon this floor, revolutions in neighboring States arisen; ay, in Cuba herself? And have not the brave spirits, who sympa-

thize with the oppressed, under the forms and sanctions of law, been hunted down upon the land and upon the sea? Under these very forms of law, has not the body of the Governor of a sovereign State been demanded—demanded, too, whilst in the discharge of his executive duties, sitting in the very citadel of State sovereignty, where her laws are executed, and her government directed—laws, sir, which the illustrious Clay said were the result of the pernicious influence of foreign ministers over the legislation of the country? Sir, it was one of the noblest commentaries upon General Quitman's life, that he chose to disrobe himself of the mighty mantle which the people had imposed upon him, and resuming the place of a private citizen, submit to an arrest, to avoid the shock that would naturally be felt by this conflict between Federal power and State sovereignty. In my judgment, a heavier blow was never struck at southern rights, southern interests, the advancement, the fulfillment of our great American destiny, than when Commodore Paulding perpetrated upon our people his high-handed outrage under the pretext of these same forms of law. And, sir, I want no better evidence of the truth of this declaration, and of the correctness of the vote I gave the other day upon the resolution of thanks to Commodore Paulding, than that every solitary Abolitionist and Republican voted for it, and against censuring him.

In close connection with the Cuban question stand our Central American relations and kindred interests in the Gulf of Mexico. Although a little more remote from us than Mexico or Cuba, yet these Central American States stand in the direct pathway to our possessions on the Pacific. It is of the most vital interest to our people and to the commerce of the world that this great thoroughfare should be uninterrupted. This uninterrupted intercourse is now seriously threatened, if not fatally impaired. We are informed by the President that the complications between Great Britain and the United States, arising out of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of April, 1850, have not been finally adjusted. This is much to be regretted; for no act of Governmental policy or diplomacy has so militated against the natural march of American advancement as has this fatal treaty. It should be abrogated by our Government. The manacles with which it fetters the giant limbs of American progress should be torn asunder. England has already the advantage of us in these rich and fertile regions of the South. By her diplomacy and policy she already claims control of more than one-third of Central America. I fear she is now endeavoring to weave around us a still closer net. After the very able and interesting speech, the other day, of my friend from Virginia, (Mr. JENKINS,) nothing has been left me to say upon this branch of my subject.

Sir, I do not like at all the prospect that is presented to us in our southern seas. The great maritime Powers of Europe surely mean something by their manifest interference. In examining the correspondence that has recently been communicated to Congress on these subjects, what do we find? Why, sir, we had every reason to believe, we had every official assurance, that this question, this very delicate question of the right of search, was settled. But, sir, we see by this correspondence that this search on the part of British men-of-war has been transferred from supposed slavers to supposed fillibusters. I look, sir, upon this as a far greater outrage upon the rights of American citizens and the freedom of our flag than has heretofore been perpetrated. Permit me, sir, for a moment to call your attention and the attention of this House, and especially gentlemen representing American interests, and a proud constituency, a little to the detail of this correspondence.

In a note of Captain W. Cornwallis Aldham, of her Majesty's ship *Valorous*, to Commander McIntosh, of the American squadron, we find this language :

"In reply, I must express my great regret that you should consider the act of visiting an American merchant vessel within this port, which is under the protection of Great Britain, for the purpose of obtaining the information which is usually required by all civilized nations from vessels entering their harbors, or those under their protection, or in any friendly port, in the same light as the delaying, boarding, and examining of an American vessel on the high seas in search of slaves or pirates; and I still more deeply regret that my acting in accordance with established usages in this respect should cause you to apprehend any such grave danger as that to which you allude."

Sir, we have the declaration here boldly made by a British officer, by authority and under instructions from his Government, that this port was under British protection. Sir, this was news to the gallant McIntosh, it is doubtless news to us, that Great Britain had assumed the protectorate and control of that port and those waters. Commander McIntosh, very justly and properly repudiated upon the part of his Government, the idea, as being in direct contravention of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. Captain Aldham claims that his visit to the *Washington* was only one of courtesy, for the purpose of obtaining information required by all civilized nations from vessels entering their harbors. Let us see what was the intention of this friendly, courteous visit for the purpose of obtaining such information as was usual amongst civilized nations. As it is short, I will quote the whole letter of Captain Jarvis, of the United States ship *Savannah*, to Commander McIntosh, on this subject :

UNITED STATES SHIP SAVANNAH, SAN JUAN DEL NORTE,
November 20, 1858.

SIR: I have the honor of informing you that, since I wrote you this afternoon, I have the following information :

Two officers from one of the British ships in the harbor boarded the Washington within fifteen minutes after she came to anchor, and asked Captain Churchill the following questions: "Where from?" "How many passengers have you?" "How many days out from New York?" "Did you stop at any port on your way out?"

These questions were answered; they then wished to look at his passenger list. Captain Churchill referred them to his purser. On looking over the list, which they received from the purser, they asked "How many passengers have you?" He answered by stating the number. "Are they all Americans?" "No; they are of various nations." "Are they armed?" "Not any to my knowledge." "Did the American officers who boarded you examine your hold?" "No." Mr. King, the first mate, who was present at the interview, remarked that if they (the officers) wished any information on the subject, they might obtain it by applying to one of the American ships-of-war in the harbor. They replied "that their instructions were to obtain their information direct."

The above is all the information I have received, and I shall await your further instructions upon the subject.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
JOSEPH R. JARVIS, *Captain.*

Flag Officer JAMES MC. MCINTOSH,
Commander-in-chief Home Squadron.

Sir, is this not a most beautiful specimen of a visit for the interchange of courtesies "for the purpose of obtaining information only which is usually required among civilized nations?" As well might you class a band of armed soldiery as courteous visitors, who would rudely intrude upon the privacy of your mansion, search your chambers, and catechise you as to whether your guests were gentlemen or harbored and concealed outlaws. Bear in mind, sir, this vessel had already been boarded and searched by American officers, and these British patrols of the sea knew it. But, sir, as they said themselves, they were acting under instructions "to get their information direct." Instructions from whom? Why, of course, from their own Government. Instructions to do what? Why, sir, that they should not be satisfied with any secondary evidence. But they must go on board themselves, in person; search, examine, get their information direct as to the character, mission, and private business of American vessels and American citizens.

What a state of facts, these, to go to prove a social, friendly, courteous visit. When came those harbors to be British harbors, or those provinces under British protection?

What further does the British captain say about boarding another American vessel, the Catherine Maria?

"Having received a notification from the authorities of the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Governments that a hostile force had landed, or were about to land, in the river Colorado, with a request that I would aid in preventing it, I immediately dispatched Captain Wainright in the Leopard, to ascertain if such was the case.

"Captain Wainright left this port late in the afternoon of the 18th instant; and, it being dark, mistook the entrance of the river, and anchored two or three miles to the southward of it. At daylight he weighed and anchored off the river, and in his own boat, accompanied by two others, pulled into the river, examining the banks on either side to see if there were any traces of a landing having taken place. In proceeding up the river he observed the Catharine

María at anchor, and, as he neared her, perceived some persons on board with whom he was acquainted. He immediately went alongside in his own boat only, and, going on board, requested to be informed if they had heard, or had seen, anything resembling marauders or fillibusters in the neighborhood."

In the first place, this prying British officer examines the banks minutely under instructions, to see if there were any traces of landing.

Sir, supposing there had been traces of landing. Supposing Captain Wainright, you had found that native-born American citizens had landed on these shores, what, let me ask, did you propose to do about it? Hunt them down and capture them? Sir, by what authority are these things tolerated? Instructed to inquire and search, to see if anything resembling marauders were on board American vessels, or had landed on this American soil. Sir, who constituted these British gentlemen, clothed with a little brief authority, judges to decide whether or not American citizens, peaceably pursuing their lawful business upon the common highways of the world, were marauders? What are marauders? They are plunderers, rovers in search of booty, plunder. Who placed these gentlemen in judgment upon the rights and liberties of freemen? When, I ask, were British men-of-war, and British officers, under a British flag, in British uniforms, panoplied with the power to patrol American seas, board and search American vessels, pry into the private character and business of American citizens?

Sir, I do not know how these proceedings strike most members upon this floor, but; for myself, I am bold to say, that they seem to me high-handed usurpations of power and authority, of indignity and outrage, not paralleled in the whole history of this question of search. Sir, it is an espionage upon the rights of American citizens which should not be tolerated.

The autocratic policy of England and France is now openly putting itself in the pathway of American advancement. By the edict of the French Emperor, an independent American State has been extinguished. The Republic known as the Dominican Republic (the western part of the island of Hayti) has been, by French intervention, blotted out. Napoleon has declared that the existence of this Republican American State, was incompatible with the policy of negro supremacy. No longer ago than the 14th of December last, we find in the *Courrier de Paris*, the following threatening language in connection with the idea of the Americanization of Central America:

"Europe, meanwhile, cannot tolerate the semblance of such an enterprise. The same considerations which led them to undertake the war in the East exist here with an equal force, and they are sustained by motives of general interest which there would be danger in forgetting. By her situation Central America

is destined to become the point of the concentration of the commerce of the world, and to let the United States take possession of it would be to yield to them the monopoly of the future transaction between Europe and the entire Orient." * * * * *

"It has been said for some days past there is a project for a mixed monarchy for the Island of Cuba, and that of Porto Rico, which would give to those possessions an independent existence, a nationality of which they have always been deprived. It is possible, also, that in the near future Mexico—alas! for her internal convulsions—will become more calm; she can then follow their example, and an intimate alliance between the three kingdoms would suffice to protect them against the aggressions of their powerful neighbors. This plan is said to be irresistible, and Spain, the first who has taken the initiative, would not hesitate a moment to put it in practice. Perhaps for herself it is not to be regretted, for she does not at present succeed in maintaining her dominion over Cuba by example, but has to aid it by a display of force which renders that rich colony a burdensome charge upon the mother country.

"There has been a question, likewise, but with more foundation it appears, as to a confederation between the diverse States of Central America; and it is also added that the Presidents of those five Republics ought to assemble in Congress at Guatemala, at the end of this month, for the purpose of laying the bases of that union. France boldly encourages that combination, and will even name a delegate to assist at the conference."

Although the British press is more cautious and less threatening; although sometimes we see a sentiment thrown out in her prints that American expansion is no matter of concern to her, yet the same hostile feeling pervades England as well as France, to the spread and supremacy of American institutions and American policy on the American continent.

Listen to the significant language of the London Post, of 18th December last:

"The Monroe doctrine is, we are told also, to be enforced in the negotiations which are in progress in Central America. The Monroe doctrine is practically a mere byword. It gratifies the self love of the American people to tell them that the power of the Republic is destined to reach, at no distant day, from the St. Lawrence to the mainland of South America. But have the Powers of Europe no voice in the matter? Can it be a matter of indifference to them that the most important military or commercial position in the world should fall under the exclusive control of the United States? The true policy of Mr. Buchanan would be to build up the weak States which occupy the Isthmus, to place the neutrality of the route under the guarantee of the great commercial Powers of the world, and not to covet territories which can only be more valuable to the United States than to other countries, just as they afford facilities for the extension of the desolating curses of slavery."

Here, sir, the great fact is let out that European Powers are to have a voice and assert their supremacy in these matters. And that we are to have no facilities afforded us for the extension of the "desolating curse of slavery."

Sir, the self-same policy quickened by the ardent desire to put down in America slavery and slave labor, which impelled the alliance of England and France against Russia, stimulates them to an alliance against us. The Crimean war was a war to pull down Russian ascendancy and supremacy in Russian seas and upon Russian borders. English and French combinations now openly conspire to put down American suprem-

acy and ascendancy, and to assert their own, on American seas and upon the American continent.

Sir, how are we to understand these bold and threatening interferences on the part of these foreign Powers? Is Napoleon to give direction to the conduct of affairs on the American continent? Are we to sit idly by when it is boldly proclaimed by French authority that the strong arm of foreign Power is ready and prepared to rear, out of Cuba, Central America, and Mexico, a great monarchical empire? Sir, if these things be so, then perish forever the boasted Monroe doctrine. Away with the pitiful provision of Clayton and Bulwer even, that neither Great Britain nor America should exercise control over or colonize any portion of Central America. Sir, does it take any great political seer to discover that foreign intervention is building about us walls, as I said in the outset of my remarks, which would shadow our destiny; that their foundations are being laid?

I stand here to-day to lift my voice, feeble though it be, in vindication of the rights of American freemen upon the great highways of commerce. I stand here, by my voice and by my vote, ready to strike down such barriers as interpose in the bright pathway of American prosperity and advancement. I am battling as best I can for what I regard as the dearest interests of our common country. I may err; but if I do, I am consoled with the proud reflection that I am erring on the side of my country, in behalf of a great American sentiment—on the side of southern rights, southern interest, and southern honor.

Sir, the same arguments that are now urged against American progress, have been urged against the acquisition of every foot of territory this Government has ever acquired—territory, every square acre of which is as priceless to us now as the proud sovereignty of independent States. But, thanks to the wisdom of Democratic policy, this great Government of ours, over every opposition, at home or abroad, on the land or on the sea, has gone on prospering and to prosper, as I trust in God it will continue to do until the American standard will float from the battlements of Cuba, and American civilization and enlightenment illumine the dark places of the American continent; until, in the fullness of time, we shall have filled the measure of our grand, our ultimate destiny; that destiny written by Deity himself concerning the great future of the nations of the earth.